

# Studies in 1 John 07 Evidences Brotherly Love

by John W. Bramhall

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of love in the family of God and the command to love one another because of God's love.*

**Duration:** 52:26

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37, John 13:34, John 15:12

**Topics:** "Brotherly Love", "Christian Fellowship"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of experiencing true joy in our lives as believers. He highlights the desire of God the Father for His children to be filled with joy and happiness. The sermon is based on the epistle of John, specifically chapter 4, which addresses the responsibility of believers in this world. The preacher also warns against the unreality of professing love for God while hating one's brother, emphasizing the need for genuine love and fellowship within the family of God. The sermon concludes with the assurance that when our hearts and lives are filled with the love of the Father and the Son, we can have boldness in the day of judgment.

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## Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles to the fourth chapter of the epistle of John? We come toward the ending of this wonderful letter that God has written, penning it in the power and by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through his beloved servant John. We thank God for the great subjects that have been revealed and shall yet be revealed in relation to the family of God. May I emphasize once again, this epistle is a family letter, particularly addressed to God's children within this world.

We have noted it concerns that great privilege that is above every privilege, that you and I who were redeemed and born again, have been brought into fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. Let us not forget that that fellowship in its enjoyment is to be enjoyed to the wholeness of capacity. As the Apostle well wrote, that for the very purpose of penning this letter, he declared these things rightly to you, that your joy may be full.

I wonder how many of us really get filled up with joy. We often think of it, we may even witness about it, but beloved, I think probably we ought to think just what the old Scotchman said, it's better felt than telt. How we need to realize the great heart of the Father desires the joy and the happiness of his beloved children.

We particularly have been looking at the last section, beginning in chapter 3 toward the end, regarding the Father's purposes and his desires for the children while they are in this world. And he has been speaking to our hearts and to our consciences. Tonight we begin in chapter 4 and consider by the grace of the Lord and the help of his Spirit, beginning at verse 7, what John has to declare regarding another responsibility belonging to the children of his family while we're in this world.

And that responsibility in the whole section can be emphasized by this expression. He desires the evidences and the expression of love to be manifested one toward another. God is concerned whether you and I may not be.

He is concerned about the affections of his people for one another. And John resumes the theme that he mentioned in chapter 3, from verse 14 through verse 18, where we noted on a past occasion that he declared we ought to love one another. And our love for one another should be such we are willing to lay down our lives for each other.

No wonder the Lord Jesus said when he was upon the earth, greater love hath no man than this, than a man lay down his life for his friend. And I would challenge mine own heart from the word of God. I would challenge your heart, my fellow believer, from his word.

Do we love one another to that degree? That is the responsibility. That is what God desires to see, experience, and express amongst his children. The reality of that blessed love for one another, John, by the Spirit, was greatly desirous to see.

We've often called in Tropolli, John the Apostle of Love. And he does, beyond any other New Testament writer, mention love more than them all. I believe if you take his gospel, link it together with his epistles, you will find a total of 85 occasions that he mentions the verb love in one form or another.

You will find, if I'm correct, that even in the epistle, 44 times, he mentions love. And you will find in the section before us, beginning at verse 7 in chapter 4, to the end of it, that he mentions it 26 times. Now I don't know how you feel about it, but may I illustrate the truth of it in this way.

There is nothing greater in a human family of parents and children than the prevailing of love between them. Love is the heart of the home. And may I say with thankfulness of heart, I've ever appreciated, and will always appreciate, that between one another in my immediate family, there is a bond and there is a tie that binds us together.

And that tie is love. Even though there may be, even though your children may be grandparents, and grandchildren and others come in, the tie that binds the family together must be love. One of the greatest joys I still have, though my granddaughter is up in her twenties now, but very frequently when her telephone conversations end, they always end with this expression, Granddad, I love you.

And I want to tell you I appreciate it. My brother and my sister. I wonder if you and I, in simplicity but in sincerity, can look at one another and say with the affection that is not human, but with an affection that we know is divine, the love of God, can we say to one another, I love you.

Now may I make a distinction before we go and study the affection together. To qualify the fact, there can be a great deal of difference between love and liking a person. I may not always be able to like what you do.

To be pleased with what you are, nevertheless, I must love you. That is the command of God. Look at it in the opening verse, verse seven.

Please know what John writes. As in the seventh verse, he opens it by saying, Beloved, let us love one another. The very exhortation and command of love, he gives.

And what a responsibility. And then as he goes on, please note, blessed of the recognition and the realization, what is the source of that love? Love is of God. May I state again, this is not human affection.

This is far greater and far beyond all human affection that it could ever be. This is the implanted love that is entirely in its spring and in its power and in its source from God himself. Did not the apostle write in Romans 5, 5? For the love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.

And so the command is, love one another. The source and strength and power and spring of that love, God. I would not question the fact.

It could indeed be possible. We may find and would find it difficult to love one another in the flesh. In the flesh, we love those who love us.

As a rule. In the family of God, the example is not to love because we are loved, but because God has loved us. And it is his love whereby we love one another.

And as the apostle goes on to say, for every one that loveth, and here you have the evidence of the real born-again believer, every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. What an evidence that I am the child of God when I manifest and express in my conduct, in my behavior, in my attitude, in my heart's attitude to my fellow believers, I love them. And it confesses I'm a born-again child of God.

It confesses I know God. And then the beloved apostle goes on very carefully to remind us, he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. One who does not love, now let me again repeat, may I distinctly make it clear, this is love to God's children.

John is not touching upon love for sinners, though we should have that too. But what he's concerned about is family love. And am I not raising a subject that should be of greatest concern amongst God's people today? Love, true divine flow of love amongst the people of God.

May I reverently say, there is a great misconception concerning the character of love amongst many so-called Christians today, and many so-called Christian movements today. They are emphasizing love, but at the sacrifice of character as well as the truth of God. That's not true divine love.

God is love. It's His nature, one of the great attributes of His being. Many attributes belong to Him.

This is one of the most precious. God is, by His nature, love. And beloved, have we not learned that one of the great motives from chapter three of practical righteousness, one of the great motives was the very presence of the new nature in you, God's own life dwelling in you and in me, my fellow believer, motivating us to be as He is.

For we have His life, we have His nature. And it is not only God's nature to be sinless, to hate sin, but it is His nature to love. And especially, of course, when you look at the relationship of the Father to His children.

And beloved, let you and I realize, I think sometimes, well I thought with in my early days when the children, as all children when they're growing up, they may fight amongst each other and with each other. And when they get a little bit too boisterous in doing it, you just bang their heads together and say, now get along with each other. I don't know who'd bang our heads together.

I think it would take the Lord. But please understand the meaning. My fellow believer, may I say it earnestly, we who are the children of God should manifest we can get along together.

We may not always be able to see eye to eye, to think mind to mind, to do everything according to what our personal desires may be. But here there has been implanted in the born again believer by the Spirit of God who has brought regeneration, the very nature of God, to love. For God is love.

He that loveth not, doth not know God. And of course, has no nature as God's love within him. God is love.

Now notice you go on to the next verse, please, very carefully. I want you to note verse 9 and 10 in particular. For John goes on to write, And in this was manifested the love of God toward us.

Now please note, John is not referring to the world. Let me make that distinction again. In this was the love of God manifested toward us.

And John is embracing the family because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Here it is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sin. And we have before us, as we have already noted in the study of the epistle, in this particular portion, one of the reasons for the manifestation of the love of God toward us.

Oh how we thank God for that manifestation. Please underscore throughout the whole epistle, the expression manifested, manifest. And we found at the commencement of it that he who is the word of life, he who is the eternal life, he who was and is and ever will be the eternal Son of God, the eternal word, he was made flesh and manifested in that life incarnate.

God hath revealed the Father. And in that manifestation the love of God came toward us. May I pause for a moment and remind your heart, my believer, my fellow believer, as well as mine own, God did not withhold his love toward us.

Will you give me one reason why I should withhold my love in the Lord toward another believer? I may not always be able to go along in fellowship with the path of that believer. I may find scriptural reasons that I cannot commune as I wish I could with some of my fellow believers. But I cannot find one reason why my heart as a Christian should not show love toward all the children of God.

You cannot restrict the child of God from your Christian affection without indicating the Father should do it too. And you know he never will. He never will.

But the affection of God's children should be just as wide in his embrace as the heart of the Father. You know that. You expect and you desire to see it in your earthly family.

That in the extent of the earthly families we represent, that the whole family may be one bundle of love. And may I say that's the Father's desire from above for the children of God to thus love one another. He himself has manifested his love toward us, and by so doing he brought us, as the apostle says in this ninth verse, that we might live through him.

And thus the possession and the sending of his Son has brought us the possession of life eternal, which is his love bringing us his life through that blessed Son whom he sent. And you have the definition that follows in verse ten, so precious to realize here in Islam, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

May I ask my fellow believer, are not you and am not I glad? The Lord did not wait for me or wait for you to love him before he loved us. Hallelujah. He would have been waiting still.

You know that. Not that we loved him. He loved us.

Would that we could realize that's the kind of love we should show one to one another. I think of the words of that lovely chorus that our dear brother Arthur Smith wrote, if I can recall them correctly. Lord crucified, give me a heart like thine.

Teach me to love the dying souls around. O keep my heart in closest touch with thee, and give me love, pure Calvary love, to bring the lost to thee. And if our beloved brother could write such a chorus of such truth regarding the winning of the lost, my fellow believer, please may I say, how much more we who are the children of God could manifest our love for one another.

And as the Lord is so loved us, and what a love, giving his Son as our propitiation, no wonder John closes the exhortation in verse 11. Beloved, his God so loved us. Now may I make another distinction again? This little word so is so inexpressible, I know.

But let me link it. As we often quote John 3.16, for the benefit of the unsaying. For God so loved us, the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Yet God's love went out to the whole world. But my beloved fellow believer, may I bring it close to your heart. When you get in his family, he loves you more.

You are dearer to his heart. You are one of his children. And you've got to confess, in the family relationships of life, our own children, there's a kinship, there's an affinity that is deeper with our own kith and kin because of the blood ties that bind us together.

And when God looks at his family upon the earth, may I tell you, I don't know whether you believe it, it's the best family upon the earth. I've heard people say we're a bad lot, but I want to tell you we're the best of the lot when you're in God's family. Children of God, O glorious calling.

And beloved, if God so loved us, then know what John says plainly, we ought also to love one another. The only reason that John gives that you and I should love one another is because we ought to do it. Because the Father has so loved us.

What an example. How we greatly fail. But what a joy to recognize this is God's own nature which you and I can manifest.

And it is his expectation that we prove his love by loving one another. Well you know something in this verse, please, something missing in it. And that is God is not asking in this verse that we love him.

I'm sure if I asked every Christian here tonight, do you love God? Every true believer, I feel confident. Though you may feel some weaknesses to your confession, some inability to love him as you ought, you

would confess. But I'm sure you would make readily the confession, yes, I know I love God.

But let me ask you, what answer would you give me if I asked do you love every Christian? Do you love every member of the family of God? That's what John by the Spirit is commanding us to do. God is not asking us if we love him. He's asking do we love one another.

My, what a responsibility. I tell you one thing, if we did it as we ought, we'd get along a lot better. And that family peace, that family blessing, that family joy, and that family fellowship would be wonderful.

And then note very carefully as we read on in verse eleven, if I may, verse twelve rather, going to verse twelve, no man hath seen God at any time. Now you know where that quotation would almost come from. John wrote it in chapter one of his gospel in verse eighteen, when he declared, no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.

He hath declared him. And the very expression of this verse in its opening sentence carries the mind and heart back to what John wrote, how the manifestation of God's love came and was declared by the one who was in the bosom of the Father and who still is in the bosom of the Father. Whoever was in the bosom of the Father.

No man never ever saw him, but when the Son came and manifested, forming humanity, he declared the Father's love. He told all that was in the Father's bosom. And none but the Lord could ever tell what was in the Father's heart.

Suitably did the Lord Jesus say in Matthew eleven, twenty-seven, as when he declared, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Now may I link this together? Though no man had ever seen God at any time, when the Son came in human form, he made him known. In all the fullness of the Father's heart, he unfolded all that he knew.

And he alone knew perfectly, completely, fully the fullness of that Father's heart, a heart of love. And when you read his life upon the earth, there you see him revealing what he had brought from the bosom of the Father to make known to mankind, the love of that Father's heart. By his words, by his deeds, by his life and death, he revealed in complete fullness all that he knew was in the bosom of the Father's heart.

He manifested it. Now listen, he's not here on the earth anymore. It's up to you and me, my fellow believer, to do the manifesting.

No man hath seen God at any time, writes John, but if we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us. My fellow believer, may I put it this way, bluntly, plainly, clearly. The Son has left this scene.

He fully manifested the love of the Father's heart as we well know, the evidences of it by his life and by his death, to make propitiation for our sins. Now where is the world going to learn of the Father's love except through you, through me? Where can the world see manifested, openly, publicly revealed, the love of God? Now, my fellow believer, there's only one vehicle, one instrument that he can use. The Father has to use his children, the children of God.

Again I lift my heart in humble prayer, Father, please help me to manifest thy love. For if we thus abide in that blessed God, if we dwell in him, if we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in

us. Now please don't get the mistaken idea that he's speaking of sinless perfection.

We have noted in the past that John very clearly and definitely reminds us of the imperfections while we're in the body, that none of us are sinless, and that any sin in the life of the believer should be exceptional and infrequent. But what John is saying, when love flows to one another in the family of God, it manifests that the love of God is perfected in us. We are dwelling in him.

And then in the next verse, the twelfth, you note, or the thirteenth, hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. God's love perfected in us. May I remind you of something that we read in chapter two, in verse five, if you please? In our study of the second chapter, do you remember that we pointed out particularly two tests of being the children of God? And one test was the test of obedience, and the other was the test of love, as we study from verse four and on in the second chapter.

But let me point out verse five again. Chapter two. But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected.

My beloved child of God, may I say this? If you and I are going to manifest that the love of God is perfected in us, we've got to love one another. We must be obedient. We are commanded to keep his word.

And may I say, as the Lord Jesus said in John 13, 34, as we have noted even in our epistle, a new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Hereby shall the world know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. Again, it links itself with the manifestation of God, his love, and our Savior, his life, and his person, when we obey that commandment, loving one another.

My fellow believer, I'd like to set before you, please, I may not know, I don't even wish to know, what differences there may be, and we know there are too many differences between God's people. But I tell you one fact God makes very clear. Whatever may be the earthly situations and the circumstances, there should ever be in the heart of every born again believer, the manifestation of love to my fellow Christian.

As I said on one preceding occasion, when I took exception and had to stand for the truth of the word of God, which was being proposed to me in error by another brother, I contended against it. And he looked at me in astonishment and said, we can be friends, can't we? And I said to him, smilingly, I said, friends, I've got to love you. My beloved, I want to tell you, what to God we realize we are commanded to love.

We are commanded to love. I remember reading the story, quite interesting, many of you old country folks may recall, how in the past centuries, in the country of Great Britain, or the United Kingdom, there was a great division between the Church of Scotland and the Church of England. They relied against each other.

They were opposed greatly. There was a bitterness, there was a hatred between them. On one occasion, the Bishop of England went to see the Bishop of Scotland to see if he couldn't break down the resentment that existed.

And when he came to the old Scotch Bishop, the old Scotch Bishop looked at him somewhat disdainfully and said to him, how much of the Bible do you know? How many commandments are there? The English Bishop looked at him and said, eleven. What? Answered the Scotchman. Eleven? You don't know your Bible.

How many commandments are there? And again he said, eleven. He said, listen, you know there's only ten commandments. The Bishop of England said again, there's eleven.

The Scotchman said, tell me what's the eleventh commandment? And then he quoted it. A new commandment, give I unto you that ye love one another. Oh beloved, we're willing to quote the ten commandments, but we're not very willing to keep the eleventh commandment.

Love one another. My, I wonder what the Father thinks of his children. Nay, shall I not say, Father, what do you think of me? Shall I not pray the prayer of David when he said, search me, O God, and know my heart, and see if there be any wicked way, way of pain or grief in me, and leave me in the way everlasting.

Now know what the Apostle goes on to say, as he thus testifies, and has testified of that love, and goes further in verse fourteen. We have seen, and we do testify, that the Father sent the Son into the world to be sent the Son, the Savior of the world. It almost sounds like John 4, where the Samaritans called the Lord Jesus the Savior of the world.

And John could say, we have seen it, we have testified, the Son was sent as the Savior of the world. Then note, if you will, verse fifteen. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Beloved, one can recognize that John is really going back to the good tidings of joy and of salvation that we have found in our blessed Savior, the Savior of the world. We have confessed the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. We have confessed Jesus is the Son of God, and because of that confession, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

O beloved one, go back to John 14, will you please, in the chapter of the gospel, the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of John. There is one word from the lips of the Lord Jesus that is exceedingly precious as well as tremendously profound. The fourteenth chapter in the gospel of John.

Now I want you to listen to the words of the Lord Jesus, if I may read them. Verse twenty. As he speaks of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the context preceding it, At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

My beloved, what a bond! Where the Lord Jesus declares the union of himself with the Father, and the union of the believer with him, and the union of Christ with the believer, the Father, the Son, and the believer by the indwelling Spirit, thus joined together. I wonder if Peter's words sometimes should not come to our memory. What manner of persons ought ye not to be? Children of the Father, and heirs with the Son, indwelled by the Spirit, the Father in us by the Spirit, the Son dwelling in us by the Spirit, the Spirit himself dwelling in us.

And we who have confessed that Jesus is the Son of God, we thank God. God dwelleth in us. God dwelleth in us.

Can I repeat it? God dwelleth in us. May I make the statement, there are two great doctrines in the New Testament. The first and the greatest is the doctrine of Christ, without question of doubt.

The next greatest doctrine in the New Testament is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And when you read the Gospels, particularly, you have this truth. His name shall be called Emmanuel, meaning God with us, and how precious is its meaning to our hearts.

God manifesting the flesh upon the earth with us. When you look at the great doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling person of that divine person of the Godhead, equal with the Father, equal with the Son, where do you find him? Dwelling in us. God in us by the person and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Now, don't make the mistake that I was astonished to hear a brother say to me, many years ago in the early part of World War II, as we were talking of this blessed theme, he looked at me and he said, I am God, you're not. My fellow believer, God is in us. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? Which ye have of God, ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body. And what joy it is to recognize and responsibility. He dwells within me.

My Father, my Savior, the Spirit, thus combined, hath taken their abode within my heart. How could it ever be? Beloved, look, it's grace, it's love, and it's the love that the Father and God has shown to us in and through and by the person of his Son and made real to us by his Spirit. Now, if he has done that, please know what the apostle goes on to say.

Verse 16, And we know and we have known and believe the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Beloved, what you have in the sentence there is the suggestion there should be the communion between the one who is within us and we who are in him.

There should be harmonious communion, God dwelling in us, God abiding, God enjoying his presence within us, taking up his abode and we living in him. Mine's going to be a joy when we're going to live with him up there forever. But may I suggest my fellow believer enjoy--dear brother Gilbert used to say these words.

I never have forgotten them. He always, often said, if there's one thing better than knowing you're going to heaven, it's to enjoy heaven while you're going there. How can I? Only through that blessed one who gave his Son.

My Father sent him to be the Savior of my soul. The Spirit of God made him mine and made me his and brought me into the family of God. And how necessary there should be that harmonious dwelling.

Getting along with my Father, getting along with my Savior, dwelling in him, he dwelling in me. My, that's a happy family. And my fellow believer, that's what God wants in all of the family.

Well, let's hasten on. Please note verse 17 and 18. Now please, this is not the great white throne judgment, if you please.

There's boldness. Knowing the joy we have in Christ, the redemption that is ours, it is perfect. The love wherewith we've been loved is a perfect love.

It is complete. It has provided a complete redemption, an eternal redemption. And in the enjoyment of it and in the expression of it in life will give me boldness in that day of judgment to stand before him.

What a day that will be because as he is, so are we in this world. If the world hates us, all right, the Lord Jesus said, it hated me. But as he is, so are we in this world.

Please let me link it to the truth of the context. He manifested the love of God, so should we. While he was in the world, he manifested the Father's love.

While we're in the world, we are to show the Father's love. And the greatest expression of it is in the family relationship, one to the other. And I want to tell you very frankly, when there's love between the people of God, they'll have plenty of love left over for the sinners, without question of doubt.

Now may I go on and read in verse 18, There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. May God help you and me to say, Through the virtue of him who loved us, and gave his Son, and the presence of his Spirit in us, and obedience to the word of God before us, that our love may indeed be complete in his expression.

Now I want you to notice verse 19. And I want you to omit one word. It's not in the original Greek text.

Leave the word him out. We know we love him. Leave it out.

Maybe you all like to do it, but it's not in the Greek text. And just read it this way. We love because he first loved us.

And you'll recognize it's love for one another. And the great motive of loving one another is because the Lord first loved us. We love.

Not because you love me. He loved me. He loved me.

Oh, the wonder of such a thought. He loved me. I never can love him as I ought, but he loved me.

And oh, the joy. We love. Listen, my fellow believers, if you want a reason that you should love your brother and sister, here it is.

We love because he first loved us. Now in closing, John touches upon a false professor. Once again, he hits very heavily and emphatically the unreality.

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him. Now note, that he who loveth God, and this is the place and the only place in this portion you'll find our love for God mentioned.

And he who loveth God loveth his brother also. And my beloved, as we close the meditation, let me state, I must love you because I love God. And may I go further to state, I can love you because I love God.

Shall we pray? Blessed Father, no wonder the beloved apostle gave us that great love chapter in his wonderful epistle of 1 Corinthians 13. And closed it with a statement, Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three. But the greatest of these is love.

Blessed Father, the greatest attribute that has ever melted our hearts is not thine omnipotence, not thine omniscience, nor thine omnipresence, or any other attribute, but particularly thy love. And we pray earnestly, the result of our meditation will produce within the hearts of we who are thy children that true expression of brotherly love, one for another. We pray if there are any differences that exist between any others, Lord, let's get them straight.

Let's put them away. Let us love one another because thou hast loved us.

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